



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 12, 2016

**Contact: Al Naipo, (213) 974-2222**  
[anaipo@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:anaipo@bos.lacounty.gov)

### **Civilian Oversight Commission Takes Shape**

The Board of Supervisors moved a step closer to launching Los Angeles County's first-ever Civilian Oversight Commission, aimed at strengthening public trust in the Sheriff's Department.

The Board voted unanimously to adopt a [motion](#) by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and Chair Hilda Solis that established guidelines for the Commission's membership, access to information, budget and staffing.

"There is a moral imperative to ensure that constitutional policing exists in the County's communities and jails," said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas, the motion's lead author. "The establishment of a permanent oversight entity without delay is well justified, and can play a vital role in promoting transparency, restoring public trust and validating reform efforts."

"Approval of today's motion is also a critical move toward fiscal responsibility," Chair Solis pointed out. "The County spends millions of taxpayer dollars settling lawsuits. That money could be spent on housing, services, or tax relief."

The motion also drew praise from Jose Osuna, director of external affairs at [Homeboy Industries](#), which provides job training to formerly gang-involved and previously incarcerated men and women, allowing them to become contributing members of society.

"We are highly encouraged by the commitment that is demonstrated by this motion to improve relationships between law enforcement, government, and the community," Mr. Osuna told the Board.

Sheriff Jim McDonnell expressed support for the motion, saying, "I welcome the opportunity to work with the Inspector General and to have the Civilian Oversight

Commission to be able to validate the good that's being done (by the Sheriff's Department) on behalf of the public."

Since the Sheriff signed a [memorandum of agreement](#) last month to provide the Inspector General with unprecedented access to information, the Board will wait until May 31 before considering asking voters to give the Commission subpoena powers via Charter amendment.

Raphael Sonenshein, executive director of the [Pat Brown Institute at Cal State LA](#), supported the move. "I agree with the makers of the motion that it is worthwhile to allow the Sheriff to demonstrate that his voluntary agreement to share information with the Commission will be sufficient," he told the Board. "[Afterwards], the Supervisors can consider what, if any, changes should be made involving subpoena power and changes to state law.

Under the motion, the five Supervisors would each appoint a Commissioner. The Board as a whole would appoint four other Commissioners from a pool of candidates recruited by a consultant.

In an effort to diversity the expertise and perspective of Commission members, the Board decided not to ban former LASD personnel from serving on the Commission – but they would be eligible only if they had been on civilian status for at least a year.

# # #